

# Katrina – Rebuilding Efforts

## Orleans Parish Advisory Base Flood Elevation Maps

In response to the severe coastal flooding caused by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, including the devastation wrought by the levee breaches in and around New Orleans, FEMA undertook a fast-track project to develop advisory flood maps for use by affected communities and citizens during the rebuilding process. Until FEMA can complete new, detailed Flood Insurance Studies and Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) for the 15 Louisiana coastal parishes that border the Gulf of Mexico or Lake Pontchartrain (expected in 2007), these advisory maps fill a critical interim need for up-to-date coastal flood risk information.

The Hurricane Katrina Surge Inundation and Advisory Base Flood Elevation (ABFE) Maps (also referred to as “Katrina Recovery Maps”) both document the storm’s flood impacts, as well as depict the advised elevations that property owners should use in repairing or rebuilding structures. Because levees and other flood control structures had varying effects on the flooding observed in Katrina and could potentially affect the advisory flood levels, the datasets included on the maps and the graphic specifications for depicting the ABFEs were modified for areas inside of levees.

### Outside of Levees

The Katrina Recovery Maps show high water marks (HWMs) reflecting Katrina’s storm surge, as well as Katrina inundation limits that were mapped based on these surge-only HWMs and best-available topographic data. The ABFEs, which are shown with yellow boundaries and labels, are based on the flood zones boundaries and elevations shown on each community’s current, effective FIRM plus freeboard, an additional height above the FIRM elevation (usually 1-3 feet). FEMA used an analysis of flood-frequency data and updated surge modeling to determine the freeboard amount to be used in each parish.

### Inside of Levees

Maps for these areas also show Katrina surge HWMs, but no inundation limits were mapped because of the nature of the ABFE data that had to be shown. The ABFEs here are also based on the flood zone boundaries and elevations shown on each community’s effective FIRM, but no freeboard has been added. FEMA’s Flood Recovery Guidance for levee-protected areas in New Orleans and adjacent parishes directs property owners to elevate buildings to the current FIRM elevation or 3 feet above the Highest Existing Adjacent Grade (HEAG) on the site, whichever is higher. To help Katrina Recovery Map users determine which of these two elevations to use, FEMA has shown with green shading those areas where an elevation of 3 feet above HEAG would be higher than the current FIRM elevation.

For more information on the Katrina and Rita Recovery Maps produced for Louisiana, visit: [www.fema.gov/hazard/flood/recoverydata/katrina/katrina\\_la\\_index.shtm](http://www.fema.gov/hazard/flood/recoverydata/katrina/katrina_la_index.shtm) and [www.fema.gov/hazard/flood/recoverydata/rita/index.shtm](http://www.fema.gov/hazard/flood/recoverydata/rita/index.shtm)

You can view official Federal Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) at [www.msc.fema.gov](http://www.msc.fema.gov).

